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Sent: 4/2/2018 5:34:09 PM
To: AO OPA Individual News Clips [AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
Subject: The Hill: Honda executive: EPA's relaxed car efficiency standards plan not 'sensible', 3/31/18

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/381099-honda-epas-expected-emission-standards-plan-not-sensible>

Honda executive: EPA's relaxed car efficiency standards plan not 'sensible'

By Josh Delk, 3/31/18, 10:42 AM

A top executive at the Honda Motor Company says the expected relaxation of fuel efficiency standards by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is not the "sensible" plan automakers requested.

"We didn't ask for that. The position we outlined was sensible," said Robert Bienenfeld, an assistant vice president at American Honda Motor, when asked by The New York Times about the new standards.

The EPA is expected to declare within days that the fuel efficiency regulations on cars in the U.S. are too strict, and offer revisions for standards on greenhouse gas emissions enforced by the Department of Transportation.

The EPA sent a draft of the 16-page revised plan to the White House for approval this week, according to The New York Times.

Automakers, represented by the Auto Alliance and Global Automakers, have lobbied the Trump administration to loosen the tight fuel efficiency standards put in place by the Obama administration.

Under a 2011 agreement within the Obama administration, auto companies are expected to produce cars achieving an average fuel efficiency of over 50 miles per gallon by the year 2025.

The outgoing Obama administration concluded from a midterm evaluation in the weeks before President Trump's inauguration that the efficiency goals should stay in place.

It is not clear by how much the EPA would relax the standards, but some states — such as California — are concerned that if the federal government lowers the fuel standard for vehicles, it will make their goals to reduce emissions impossible.

Toyota's chief North American executive also expressed concern over the expected EPA move this week, according to Business Insider. Jim Lentz said the possibility of states imposing stricter regulations on fuel efficiency than the federal government could create a logistical nightmare for the company.

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